

Message Text

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PAGE 01 WARSAW 00083 080759Z

13

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NIC-01 SAJ-01 CU-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /110 W

----- 039670

R 080455Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7162

INFO B/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE 1686

USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USNATO 567

AMCONSUL POZNAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L WARSAW 0083

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PL, US

SUBJECT: US-POLISH RELATIONS: YEAR-END ASSESSMENT:
IDEOLOGICAL-CULTURAL

REF: WARSAW 0070

1. WE MAY SEE SOME IDEOLOGICAL/CULTURAL TIGHTENING IN
1974, EMANATING PRINCIPALLY FROM MOSCOW'S ATTEMPTS TO
COORDINATE THE IDEOLOGICAL POLICIES OF ITS COMMUNIST
ALLIES AS A DEFENSE AGAINST THE IDEOLOGICAL EROSION
INHERENT IN DETENTE. THE GOP WILL HAVE TO HANDLE THIS
CAREFULLY, SINCE IT WISHES TO HAVE THE SUPPORT, OR AT
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PAGE 02 WARSAW 00083 080759Z

LEAST THE ACQUIESCENCE, OF ITS INTELLECTUAL AND

CREATIVE COMMUNITIES FOR ITS OWN POLICIES AND FOR DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY IN THE YEAR DURING WHICH IT WILL CELEBRATE THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF COMMUNIST POWER IN POLAND.

2. ANY CONSIDERABLE IDEOLOGICAL RETRENCHMENT WOULD HAVE SOME NEGATIVE EFFECT ON OUR CULTURAL PROGRAMS, PARTICULARLY ON THOSE WITH HIGH VISIBILITY, BUT THERE IS LITTLE HARD EVIDENCE THAT THIS IS IN THE OFFING. DESPITE FREQUENT RUMORS THROUGHOUT 1973 OF IMPENDING IDEOLOGICAL TIGHTENING, THE MOST NOTICEABLE CHANGE WE HAVE OBSERVED IS THE REMARKABLY GOOD MEDIA COVERAGE WHICH THE U.S. HAS HAD IN POLAND THIS PAST YEAR.

3. IN COMPARISON WITH THE RELATIVELY FREE ATMOSPHERE OF 1973, A MORE CONSTRAINED CULTURAL CLIMATE IN 1974 COULD MANIFEST ITSELF IN SOME NUANCED WAYS WITHOUT GIVING RISE TO SERIOUS CONCERN. DURING 1973, THREE OF POLAND'S BEST LIBERAL WRITERS, KISIELEWSKI, KONWICKI, AND KARPOWICZ, WERE PERMITTED TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES ON USG GRANTS. AN ALL-TIME ATTENDANCE RECORD WAS SET BY A THEMATICALLY APOLITICAL FILM, HUBAL, WHICH CONTAINS A MESSAGE OF NATIONALISM, PATRIOTISM, AND HEROISM* AND THE TRADITIONAL IDENTITY OF POLISH CATHOLICISM WITH THESE THREE. A FILM WITH A THEME SYMPATHETIC TO THE JEWS, SANATORIUM POD KLEPSYDRA, WAS ALSO RELEASED IN THE LATE 1973 AFTER HAVING BEEN HELD BACK BY THE CENSORS FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. THE FIRST NEW MROZEK PLAY STAGED SINCE 1968 (THE BLESSED EVENT) IS A SATIRE MORE HUMOROUS THAN BITING WHICH ATTACKS THE NON-PROGRAMMATIC EMPTINESS OF TODAY'S ALLEGEDLY ANARCHISTIC YOUTH. AND THE GRAND OLD MAN OF LIBERAL POLISH LETTERS, ANTONI SLONIMSKI, HAD A SERIES OF MEMOIR-TYPE ARTICLES PUBLISHED BY POLITYKA, THE FIRST TIME HE HAS APPEARED IN AN OFFICIAL PERIODICAL SINCE 1968. GIVEN THE NATURE OF THE POLISH COMMUNIST SYSTEM, 1973 WAS NOT AT ALL A BAD YEAR FOR THE INTELLECTUALS.

4. 1973 WAS ALSO A GOOD YEAR FOR OUR CULTURAL PROGRAMS IN POLAND. OUR EXCHANGE PROGRAMS, ALREADY BY FAR THE LARGEST WE HAVE WITH ANY WARSAW PACT COUNTRY, INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY. IN THE FIRST EIGHT MONTHS OF 1973 ALONE, NEARLY 700 POLES TRAVELED TO THE U.S. ON VARIOUS EXCHANGE PROGRAMS. THE NUMBER OF AMERICAN EXCHANGE PROFESSORS TEACHING AT POLISH UNIVERSITIES INCREASED FROM 9 TO 12. A DRAMATIC INCREASE IN PRIVATE INSTITUTIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL AMERICAN STUDENT PROGRAMS IN POLAND HAS NOT BEEN FULLY TABULATED, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 WARSAW 00083 080759Z

BUT A TYPICAL EXAMPLE IS THE DOUBLING OF THE KOSCIUSZKO FOUNDATION'S SUMMER PROGRAM IN POLAND FOR AMERICAN STUDENTS, WHICH WENT FROM 50 STUDENTS IN 1972 TO 100 IN 1973.

5. ALTHOUGH AMERICAN CULTURAL INFLUENCE IS HARDER TO MEASURE STATISTICALLY THAN SPECIFIC EXCHANGES OF PERSONS, THAT ALSO REMAINS STRONG AND IS CLEARLY ON THE INCREASE. ONE CANNOT LISTEN TO A POLISH RADIO STATION LONG WITHOUT NOTING THE PREPONDERANCE

OF AMERICAN MUSIC PLAYED, USUALLY FROM EMBASSY-SUPPLIED AMERICAN RECORDINGS. POLAND IS CURRENTLY PURCHASING AMERICAN FEATURE FILMS AT AN ANNUAL RATE OF 44, INCLUDING RECENTLY PRODUCED HIT FILMS LIKE "CABARET", "MIDNIGHT COWBOY", "KLUTE", AND "LOVE STORY", AND MUSICALS SUCH AS "WEST SIDE STORY", "HELLO DOLLY", AND "BOY FRIEND", ALL CURRENTLY PLAYING IN WARSAW. 1973 SAW THE OPENING OF THE FIRST AMERICAN MODERN ART EXHIBIT IN POLAND SINCE WORLD WAR II, POSSIBLY THE FIRST EVER. OTHER AMERICAN EXHIBITS AND PERFORMING-ARTS GROUPS ENJOYED GREAT SUCCESS IN SEVERAL MAJOR CITIES DURING 1973.

6. THE POLES ALSO CONTINUE TO HAVE RELATIVELY FREE ACC*SS TO WESTERN SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND THE TREND IS UPWARD. NO ATTEMPT IS MADE TO JAM WESTERN RADIO BROADCASTING. POLES LISTEN FREELY TO VOA, RFE, AND BBC OPENLY DISCUSS WHAT THEY HEAR. NO STIGMA ATTACHES TO THE POSSESSION AND CIRCULATION OF WEST*RN PERIODICALS AND THEIR AVAILABILITY FOR PURCHASE, THOUGH STILL STRICTLY LIMITED, APPEARS TO BE ON THE INCREASE. RECENTLY, THE POLES SIGNED A CONTRACT WITH AN AMERICAN PUBLISHERS' REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE PURCHASE OF \$600,000 WORTH OF AMERICAN PERIODICALS IN 1974. WE ARE TOLD THAT THE PURCHASES COULD RISE TO AN ANNUAL RATE OF \$1 MILLION BY THE END OF 1974. ALTHOUGH MOST OF THE PERIODICALS PURCHASED WILL BE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL, NEWS AND GENERAL-INTEREST MAGAZINES WILL;ALSO BE INCLUDED.
DAVIES

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARTS, PARTY LINE, FOREIGN RELATIONS, CULTURAL EXCHANGES, COMMUNISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974WARSAW00083
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: I
Film Number: n/a
From: WARSAW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740155/aaaabzvc.tel
Line Count: 140
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: WARSAW 0070
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAR 2002 by worrelsw>; APPROVED <10 APR 2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US-POLISH RELATIONS: YEAR-END ASSESSMENT: IDEOLOGICAL-CULTURAL
TAGS: PFOR, PL, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005